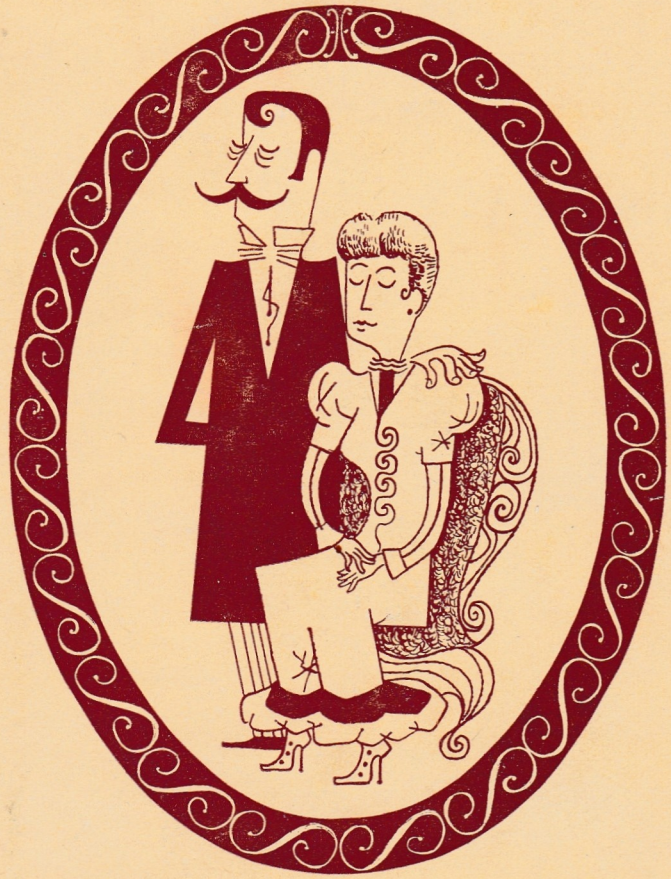
RUFFLED PETTICOAT DAYS



BLANCHE GRAY

About the Book . . .

RUFFLED PETTICOAT DAYS

By

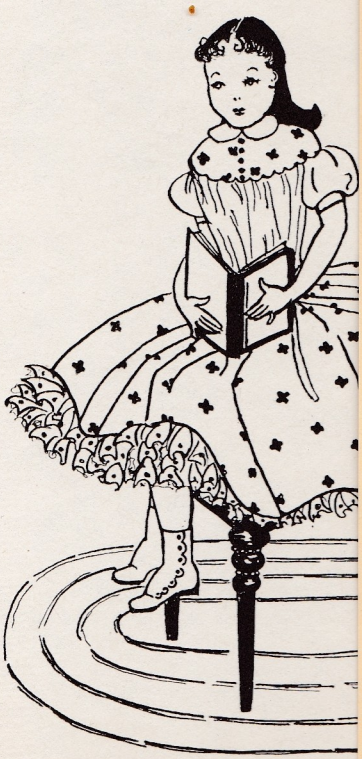
BLANCHE GRAY

Here is the lovely, nostalgic story of Los Angeles at the turn of the Century. It begins when the author first arrived here, " . . . when the town was sound asleep, resting itself under the shade of the orange trees and occasionally blinking in the sun." Those were the *Ruffled Petticoat Days.*

Blanche Gray writes here intimate reminiscences of Southern California as it was fifty years ago; and because she has always loved Los Angeles and the people who made it grow, she writes with a delightful warmth and a refreshing sense of humor.

But *Ruffled Petticoat Days* is more than the story of a growing city; it is the story of an early Los Angeles family (the Lucien Grays) as well. It is a thrilling account, full of quaint, turn-of-the-century facts which are entirely authentic since the author has lived a Leader's role in her city for over fifty years. So much so, in fact, that a portion of the book was recently used in a major speech delivered at a meeting of

Continued on Back Flap . . .



About the Book . . .

(Continued)

The California Historical Society. As a contribution to the factual history of Southern California, this book has been recognized.

For those who are yearning for a warm conversation with an old friend, however, this little volume is particularly recommended. For you will find here a quiet, casually-told story without a single reversion to the glib sophistication so often discovered in present day books.

If you would like to know more about the author of this *First Book,* please turn to the back of the jacket. We believe you will be surprised.

Jacket design: DAN HULETT

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FIRST EDITION

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Blanche (Mrs. Lucien) Gray was over eighty years old when she wrote and published *Ruffled Petticoat Days,* her first book. Whether she knows Grandmas Moses or not, we don't know; she should, they have a lot in common. Although confined to a wheelchair, Blanche Gray is a spritely, happy and always-smiling lady whom you would love to know and call friend.

She still lives in her lovely old home at 2515 4th Avenue near West Adams in Los Angeles—once the most fashionable neighborhood in a lovely, young city. It was here, in her living room, (while lawyer Gray was at his office, and the children were outdoors playing) that the very first Community Chest Drive was launched; and she has been a tireless and sympathetic worker down through the years.

Nor was the Community Chest all. In addition, Blanche Gray has been Chairman of the Girl Scout Cookie Sale for thirteen years of the past twenty; and other "Red Feather" agencies, as well as her church, have learned to depend upon her boundless energies.

In recognition of her endless contributions to the city and her host of friends, Mrs. Gray was awarded the second GOLD KEY given by the Woman's Committee of the Los Angeles Welfare Federation. She also holds the Community Chest 25 Year Service Pin; has been on the Board of the Children's Hospital for 40 years and has been on the Board of the Needlework Guild since it started.

Although still in a wheelchair and well beyond eighty (she smilingly refuses to reveal how far) Blanche Gray is already hard at work on her second book titled *On the Tips of Her Toes.* Watch for it.

with them and trying in some way to help them out of their troubles.

Farming is not so bad — seeing things grow and living an outdoor life. My daughter Margaret and I went to John's ranch one day and just made him put some bundles of his alfalfa on a truck and take them into the first County Fair of Riverside County at Indio. He won the first prize. We wanted the fair to be a success. My granddaughter, Lucienne, entered a quilt I had made for her and she won first prize.

I just love a County Fair. In fact, it was at a County Fair back in Illinois that I met my husband. He had a trotting horse which he was racing. I learned later that his father had wanted him to be a farmer and had given him a farm. He had sold the farm and gone into the racing business much to the disgust of his parents. But that business didn't last long. I guess the departure of his money ended it, so, he finally did become a lawyer.

I was very young at that time and was very much impressed to meet a man who was at least 21 years old and flattered to think he paid me any attention. Right away he asked me to go buggy riding and I surely did want to go and especially behind that lovely spirited horse.

But in those days girls of 16 were children as far as their parents were concerned so no going

out with young men in the evening or any other time. My mother did allow him to come and sit on our front porch with the family all around and there were four sisters.

So you can imagine the situation — but in the years after we kept in touch — and after I had been in London two years earning my living doing office work (as I had in the meantime gone to business college) I came home and we were married in February of 1900 in Chicago and went to Lewistown to live. It was the county seat of Fulton County and my husband was now a full fledged practicing lawyer.

I had wanted to be a lawyer myself and had studied one year and still have my old Blackstone. Well, instead of being one I married one and have always been interested in law. I surely heard a lot of it in the years we were married. I am saving my law books for Randy.

Randy, my grandson, who is now 10 years old has spent most all of his vacations with me. We have had long talks about his future. I hope he will be a lawyer and as I told him he could even be president of the United States some day. Not long ago he called me on the phone to tell me he was president of his class. I said, "Not of the United States?" and he said, "Grandmother, what do you expect?"

Comments

This is the first book she wrote.

Her second book was titled "On the Tips of her Toes" and was published in 1957. She died in 1958. She was a native of Fairbury, Illinois.

Dale C. Maley
Fairbury – Historian
February 23, 2024